



Dear NPCA Certified Plant:

For more than 20 years, NPCA has been committed to ensuring the highest quality standards in the manufacturing of precast concrete products through its Plant Certification program. To ensure the program's credibility, the NPCA Quality Assurance Committee regularly reviews certification standards to continually improve the program and clarify its guidelines. Here is a summary of revisions and clarifications to the program based on our recent review at meetings held during Committee Week and the NPCA 45th Annual Convention.

The 8th Edition of the NPCA Quality Control Manual for Precast and Prestressed Concrete Plants becomes effective on January 1, 2011. Plants inspected in calendar year 2011 will be audited to the 8th Edition of the manual. A detailed list of all of the changes made to the NPCA QC Manual for the 8th Edition located online at www.precast.org/npca-members-only. You will need your NPCA user name and password to log-in to the Members Only site.

QC Manual Format Change

The 8th Edition brings a new look to the QC Manual by incorporating new architectural requirements and prestressed requirements (formerly in Chapter 7) into Chapters 1 through 5. By integrating the architectural and prestressed requirements into the body of the manual, it is much easier for specifying agencies considering our program to locate specific requirements. The 8th edition is color coded with the content in black for all plants, red for architectural-specific requirements, and blue for prestressed-specific requirements.

Architectural Requirements

New architectural requirements have been added in Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4. As with previous versions of the QC Manual, all certified plants that manufacture products with architectural requirements must meet the minimum requirements stated in the NPCA QC Manual. If a local authority with jurisdiction has more stringent architectural requirements, the local standards will apply.

Prestressed Requirements

Prestressed plants also have new requirements in Chapter 4 of the 8th Edition.

PQS and ACI Requirements

Scoring values for PQS and ACI certifications have been added in Chapter 1. Plants that do not have primary and backup QC personnel certified with PQS and ACI will receive additional penalties for non-compliance.

Grading Schedules

All grading schedules have been revised to reflect changes in the manual format and added plant requirements.

Plant Terms and Conditions

The Plant Terms and Conditions section has been extensively revised in the following areas: Plant Inspection (Part 1, Section 1.3); Duties of the Inspector (Part 3, Section 3.3); Probationary Status (Part 5, Section 5.2); Provisional Status (Section 5.3); and Corrective Actions (Section 5.4). The language from these sections is provided below:

5.2 Probationary Status

- 5.2.1 A plant that does not comply with the conditions set forth in section 5.4.1; Corrective Action response, achieves a score of less than 75% for any critical requirement or achieves an overall plant score greater than or equal to 75% and less than 80% is eligible to receive probationary certification status (or probationary accreditation).

- 5.2.2 Probationary Certification (or probationary accreditation) status shall remain in effect until such time when the plant is reinspected or for a period not to exceed 90 calendar days from the previous inspection and the conditions calling for probationary status no longer exist, as determined by the inspection agency and/or NPCA or its agent. Plants failing to pay the reinspection fee and receive a reinspection of the plant will not be considered for certification.
- 5.2.3 In no way will the plant listing on the NPCA Web site or anywhere else indicate that a plant has received probationary certification (or probationary accreditation).
- 5.2.4 The plant must pass their unannounced reinspection and receive an overall score of 80% or greater and must score at least 75% on all Critical Requirements in order to be removed from probationary status (or probationary accreditation).
- 5.2.5 Plants that fail their unannounced reinspection will be required to reapply to the program.

5.4 Corrective Actions

- 5.4.1 All plants passing their inspection (regardless of score) must take corrective action and respond in writing to all deficiencies noted in their report and supply documented evidence (photographs, completed inspection forms, test results, copies of material certification) to illustrate compliance to requirements and of the corrective action to both NPCA and the inspection agency within 45 days of plant inspection. All plants failing to submit documented corrective action responses within 45 days of the plant inspection will receive probationary status and be subject to the conditions set forth in section 5.2.1; Probationary Status.

Updated Forms

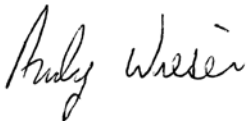
The Plant Certification Close-Out Interview and Post-Inspection Survey forms have been revised to ensure that all plants will receive a written report of any deficiencies on the day of the inspection. Plants that have Internet connections will receive an electronic version of the report. Plants that do not have an Internet connection will receive a written report that the plant representative must sign during the exit interview. The Post-Inspection Survey has also been updated to enable the Quality Assurance Committee to effectively assess the value of the inspection and overall certification process.

Important Reminder

Please make sure to forward your 2011 production schedule to Liz Todd, NPCA manager of certification programs, to avoid being charged for an inspection if the inspector comes to the plant when it is not producing. In addition, please update and send in your 2011 plant profile sheet as well.

We appreciate your continued dedication to quality through your enrollment in the NPCA Plant Certification program. If you have any questions, please contact Liz Todd by e-mail (etodd@precast.org), or phone (800) 366-7731.

Sincerely,



Andy Wieser
Chairman, Quality Assurance Committee